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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-02

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 NIC-01

SAJ-01 /059 W

----- 108967

R 101449Z MAR 75

FM AMEMBASSY VIENNA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5043

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EO 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, PGOV, AU

SUBJ: AUSTRIAN NATIONAL ELECTIONS IN OCTOBER:

PART I - CONTENDING PARTIES AND THEIR

CAMPAIGN STRATEGIES

SUMMARY: THIS MESSAGE IS FIRST OF SEVERAL DEALING WITH VARIOUS ASPECTS OF AUSTRIAN NATIONAL ELECTION CAMPAIGN. THREE PARTIES IN PARLIAMENT, COMMUNISTS AND PROBABLY ONE OR MORE SPLINTER GROUPS WILL CONTEST ELECTIONS WHICH SCHEDULED FOR OCTOBER 5. MAJOR CLASH IN POLITICAL ARENA WILL PIT GOVERNING SOCIALIST PARTY AGAINST PEOPLE'S PARTY, LEADING OPPOSITION PARTY. SOCIALISTS' CAMPAIGN STRATEGY PEGGED TO KREISKY LEADERSHIP AND PARTY'S FOUR-YEAR RECORD IN GOVERNMENT. PEOPLE'S PARTY EFFORT TAILORED TO CLAIM IT IS VIABLE POLITICAL ALTERNATIVE, CAPABLE OF GOVERNING MORE EFFECTIVELY AND AT LESS COST. CAMPAIGN DIALECTICS OF ALL PARTIES WILL STRESS ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL WELFARE THEMES. END SUMMARY

1. INTRODUCTION: NATIONAL ELECTIONS PROBABLY WILL BE HELD ON OCT. 5, FOUR YEARS AFTER LAST ELECTIONS, AS FORESEEN IN CONSTITUTION. SOCIALIST LEADERS, IN WAKE OF PEOPLE'S PARTY MOTION IN PARLIAMENT FOR EARLY ELECTIONS, REAFFIRMED OCT. DATE IN RECENT PARTY CONCLAVE AND, BY
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NOT TAKING UP MOTION IN PARLIAMENT, HAVE IN EFFECT

ENDORSED PARTY DECISION.

2. SOCIALISTS' DECISION SETS STAGE FOR WHAT PROMISES TO BE LENGTHY, HARD FOUGHT ELECTION CAMPAIGN. VYING FOR VOTER SUPPORT WILL BE THREE POLITICAL PARTIES CURRENTLY IN PARLIAMENT: SOCIALIST PARTY (SPO) WHICH IN 1971 ELECTIONS FOR FIRST TIME IN HISTORY WON ABSOLUTE MAJORITY OF 50.04 PERCENT OF VOTES AND 93 SEATS; PEOPLE'S PARTY (OVP), MAJOR OPPOSITION PARTY, 43.11 PERCENT AND 80 SEATS; AND FREEDOM PARTY (FPO) 5.45 PERCENT AND 10 SEATS. COMMUNIST PARTY (KPO) WHICH RECEIVED 1.3 PERCENT OF VOTES AND NO SEATS, WILL ALSO CONTEST ELECTIONS. THERE IS ALSO POSSIBILITY THAT SMALL SPLINTER GROUPS MAY RUN CANDIDATES.

3. CAMPAIGN STRATEGY: SOCIALISTS ARE EXPECTED TO BUILD THEIR CAMPAIGN EFFORT AROUND THEIR BIGGEST POLITICAL ASSET--THEIR HIGHLY SUCCESSFUL PARTY LEADER AND CHANCELLOR KREISKY. WITTY, SOPHISTICATED AND A POLITICAL SHOWMAN PAR EXCELLENCE, KREISKY ENJOYS VOTER APPEAL EXTENDING BEYOND SOCIALIST RANKS. AT SAME TIME SOCIALISTS WILL EMPHASIZE ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF THEIR FIVE-YEAR GOVERNMENT STEWARDSHIP, PARTICULARLY IN FIELDS OF ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL WELFARE LEGISLATION.

4. OVP, AS MAJOR OPPOSITION PARTY, WILL CONTEST ELECTIONS BY CLAIMING IT HAS BETTER PROGRAM FOR ELECTORATE AND CAN GOVERN MORE EFFECTIVELY AT LESS COST. EMPHASIS THEREFORE WILL BE ON CHARGING INCUMBENT SOCIALISTS WITH INABILITY TO RESOLVE MAJOR ECONOMIC PROBLEMS OF INFLATION AND GROWING UNEMPLOYMENT AND WITH FISCAL IRRESPONSIBILITY IN PILING UP LARGE BUDGET DEFICITS. PARTY CHAIRMAN SCHLEINZER, WHO IN PAST HAS COME OUT POOR SECOND IN POLITICAL PROFILE COMPARISONS WITH KREISKY, WILL UNDERGO FURTHER IMAGE REFURBISHING AS SERIOUS CHALLENGER WHO IS POLITICALLY MIDDLE-OF-THE ROADER AND ECONOMICALLY FISCAL CONSERVATIVE. OVP WILL PRESENT TO VOTERS THIS SPRING FINAL PORTIONS OF PARTY'S LONG TERM DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM FOR ECONOMY AND SOCIETY AS ALTERNATIVE TO THAT OF SOCIALISTS.

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5. FPO, WHICH HAS UNDERGONE SLOW BUT STEADY EROSION OF VOTER SUPPORT AT PROVINCIAL LEVEL IN RECENT YEARS, FACES PARTICULARLY DIFFICULT SITUATION IN CONTESTING 1975 NATIONAL ELECTIONS. INTRAPARTY CONTROVERSY OVER ZIG-ZAG POLITICAL COURSE OF PARTY CHAIRMAN PETER HAS ABATED SOMEWHAT BUT QUESTION OF DIRECTION OF THRUST PARTY SHOULD TAKE IN UPCOMING ELECTIONS HAS NOT YET BEEN

RESOLVED. FPO IS BESET BY ALL ILLS OF PARTY THAT IS SMALL IN SIZE AND UNABLE TO BREAK OUT OF RESTRICTIVE CONFINEMENT OF 25 YEARS OF PLAYING LIMITED OPPOSITION ROLE IN PARLIAMENT. PARTY IS LIKELY TO CAST ITSELF AS PROTECTOR ANH GUARDIAN OF BASIC ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL RIGHTS OF INDIVIDUALS AGAINST ENCROACHMENTS OF MAJOR PARTIES AND OF BIG GOVERNMENT. WHERE GEOGRAPHICALLY APPROPRIATE, APPEALS TO NATIONAL OR LIBERAL SENTIMENT WILL BE MADE.

6. KPO, WHICH HAS OVER YEARS UNDERGONE DECLINE IN MEMBERSHIP AND VOTER SUPPORT, WILL PROBABLY CONCENTRATE ITS EFFORTS IN FEW URBAN DISTRICTS WHERE IT HAS SLIM CHANCE OF GAINING DIRECT SEAT. BEING ORTHODOX IN OUTLOOK, IT WILL CONTEST ELECTIONS WITH STANDARD CLASS WARFARE SLOGANS TAILORED TO AUSTRIAN DOMESTIC SCENE.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: NATIONAL ELECTIONS, ELECTION CAMPAIGNS, POLITICAL PARTIES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 10 MAR 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: GolinoFR
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975VIENNA02050
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750083-0864
From: VIENNA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750364/aaaacgdd.tel
Line Count: 132
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: GolinoFR
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 02 APR 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <02 APR 2003 by KelleyW0>; APPROVED <03 APR 2003 by GolinoFR>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: AUSTRIAN NATIONAL ELECTIONS IN OCTOBER: PART I - CONTENDING PARTIES AND THEIR
TAGS: PINT, PGOV, AU
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006